

Bruno di Marino:

“Pride and Prejudice”: A Brief History of the Italian Music Video

The history of the Italian music video (if precursors such as the cinebox or the proto music video, represented by TV films, are excluded) begins in 1981, i.e. in the year when MTV starts to broadcast. In reality, the multinational TV station, specialised in viewable music, began in Italy only in 1997, so that the diffusion of this audiovisual form of only a few minutes is first done by some individual television programs, first of all among them Mister Fantasy, conceived by Paolo Giaccio and presented by Carlo Massarini, broadcasted between 1981 and 1984 on the first channel of the RAI, followed then by a station called Videomusic, which indeed prevented the arrival of MTV in Italy up to ten years ago. Concerning the history and in its turn the aesthetic of the Italian music video, we can certainly distinguish two main phases. The first goes through the whole decade of the 80s up to ca. 1993; the second begins then and goes up to our present days. The break is essentially dictated by an evident change of generations concerning the directors. The birth of a new school of directors, perhaps less dependant from the logic of the television and the cinema, more able to work with a small budget while obtaining good results, and first of all able to rely on increasingly cheaper technologies, available for everybody, has radically transformed the approach of the viewable music. From the point of the production, however, Italy continues to atone for the disinterest and the indifference of the record companies to invest into this form of language – this also because the market is in crisis so that the average budget (taking into account the necessary proportions) in the course of two decades has remained unchanged, if it has not even diminished.

My paper will analyse in great lines and through a historical as well as critical course almost 30 years of the production of Italian music video by showing also many extracts in order to facilitate the understanding of the peculiarities, styles and transformations of the Italian music video to an international audience of scholars and enthusiasts.